

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated November 15, 2004 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 11–13, 17, 23, 24, 26, and 32 are hereby amended. Accordingly, claims 1–33 are currently pending, with claims 1–9 being withdrawn from consideration. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 11–15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite; rejects claims 10, 16–17, and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,886,761 to Sasaki et al. (hereinafter “Sasaki”); rejects claims 18–22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sasaki; rejects claims 11–15 and 24–33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sasaki in view of European Patent Application No. EP0471628 by Nagae et al. (hereinafter “Nagae”); and rejects claims 28–31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sasaki.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 11–15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite. Applicants hereby amend claim 11 to recite “forming the striped passivation layer.” Applicants respectfully submit that this amendment overcomes the Examiner’s rejection of claims 11–15.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 10, 16–17, and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sasaki. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of independent claim 10 and request reconsideration because claim 10 recites “forming a striped passivation layer.” Nothing in Sasaki teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 10, and claims 16–17 and 23, which depend from claim 10, are allowable over Sasaki.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 18–22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sasaki. Claims 18–22 depend from independent claim 10, which recites

“forming a striped passivation layer.” Sasaki fails to teach or suggest at least this element of independent claim 10. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 18–22 are allowable over Sasaki by virtue of their dependence from claim 10.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 11–15 and 24–33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sasaki in view of Nagae. Regarding claims 11–15, which depend from claim 10, Nagae fails to cure the deficiency of Sasaki to teach or suggest “forming a striped passivation layer.” Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 11–15 are allowable over Sasaki and Nagae.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 24–33 and request reconsideration. Independent claim 24, as amended, recites “forming a striped passivation layer.” Nothing in Sasaki or Nagae, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 24, and claims 25–33, which depend from claim 24, are allowable over Sasaki and Nagae.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 28–31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sasaki. Claims 28–31 depend from independent claim 24, which recites “forming a striped passivation layer.” Sasaki fails to teach or suggest at least this feature of independent claim 24. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 28–31, as they depend from independent claim 24, are allowable over Sasaki.

Applicants believe the foregoing amendments place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

Application No.: 10/601,784
Amdt. dated February 15, 2005
Reply to Office Action dated November 15, 2004

Docket No.: 8733.850.00

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: February 15, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

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